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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [CU](#) [AM](#) [CHR](#)

SUBJECT: CHR-61: ARMENIANS WITH US ON CUBA, SHAKY ON
BELARUS

REF: STATE 42847

Classified By: DCM A.F. Godfrey for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) We delivered demarche and talking points regarding the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) upcoming annual session to MFA International Organizations Department Chief Valery Mkrtumyan March 11 per reftel instructions. Mkrtumyan predicted that the GOAM would vote with the USG on the expected Cuba resolution but was less optimistic about prospects for GOAM support of a resolution on Belarus. Mkrtumyan noted that both countries had already been actively lobbying for GOAM support at the CHR, both in Yerevan and in Geneva. He said that the GOAM agreed with the USG's approaches at the CHR on thematic issues including religious intolerance, anti-Semitism and support for the democracy caucus. We will continue to engage the GOAM from this end on CHR issues and will report any additional information as it becomes available. End Summary.

NOTING "CHARM OFFENSIVE," GOAM WITH US ON CUBA

[1](#)2. (C) Responding to demarche talking points on the expected Cuba resolution at CHR-61, MFA International Organizations Department Chief Valery Mkrtumyan predicted that the GOAM would vote with the USG this year. He said the MFA considered last year's resolution a "weather balloon" on the issue and called the Cuba resolution a "good place for us to cooperate" at CHR. Mkrtumyan said co-sponsorship would not be likely but encouraged the USG to forward the latest information regarding a Cuba resolution to GOAM representatives in Geneva. He reported the GOAM's perception that the USG weighed support for the Cuba resolution as an important symbol of loyalty and asked that we report to Washington that the GOAM wanted to be counted "among the faithful" on the issue.

[1](#)3. (C) Mkrtumyan and other contacts in the MFA reported to us that the Cubans had already been actively lobbying the GOAM regarding CHR-61. Cuban Ambassador Jorge Martinez (resident in Moscow) reportedly raised the issue of a Cuba resolution during his recent visit to Yerevan. Our MFA contacts said the GOAM did not commit any support to the Cubans regarding CHR, but noted what appeared to them to be the latest installment in a "charm offensive" on human rights issues this year by the Cubans. Martinez and others have, according to MFA contacts, raised human rights issues on a number of occasions, attempting to portray GOAM support for Cuba at last year's UNGA as a vote of confidence for Cuba's human rights record.

BELARUS "TOO CLOSE TO OUR NEIGHBORHOOD;" GOAM "NO-ACTION?"

[1](#)4. (C) Mkrtumyan said that GOAM support for a USG-sponsored resolution on Belarus would be unlikely this year. He said that Belarus was "too close to our neighborhood" and that the GOAM was wary of repercussions were it perceived to be undermining a CIS neighbor. While normally opposed to no-action motions for the same reason the USG outlined in this demarche, Mkrtumyan said that a no-action motion may be Armenia's only viable option on Belarus during CHR-61. Like the Cubans, Mkrtumyan said the Government of Belarus had been in touch with the GOAM regarding CHR and that they expressed concern about a resolution on the domestic human rights situation during CHR-61.

POTENTIAL ALLIES IN GENEVA

[1](#)5. (C) Post notes that Artak Apitonian, former MFA Deputy Chief of the International Organizations Department, will be transferred to the GOAM Mission in Geneva within the next few weeks. Well-versed in USG positions, Apitonian has been quite cooperative on USG demarches in the past and should be

cultivated as a potential resource for future initiatives.
Post has sought to support Apitonian during various outreach
and representational events. He appears to have the
confidence of the MFA given his new assignment.
EVANS